

ELEVEN ADDITIONAL
LETTERS

FROM

R U S S I A,

IN THE

REIGN OF PETER II.

BY THE LATE Mrs. VIGOR.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

WITH

A PREFACE AND NOTES.



P R E F A C E.

A Former collection of “ Letters from Russia” by this ingenious lady, published, with her own consent, in her life-time, 1775, having been well received by the public, the Editor doubts not that the following, found among her papers since her decease, being equally interesting, will meet with the same favourable reception. They are printed so as to be bound up with the others.

The

The late Mrs. Vigor was the daughter of the rev. Mr. Goodwin, a clergyman of large fortune in Yorkshire, which, after her brother's death, devolved to her, and was married, 1. to Thomas Ward, esq. Consul General to Russia, 1728; 2. to Claudius Rondeau, esq. Resident at that court, Nov. 23, 1731; and 3. to William Vigor, esq. of Taplow, Bucks, whom she long survived. She died at Windsor, September 12, 1784, aged 84. The following just character of her appeared soon after in the Gentleman's Magazine.

“ Her

“ Her loss will be severely felt
“ by the neighbouring poor, a-
“ mongst whom she was con-
“ stantly searching after proper
“ objects for the exercise of her
“ charity and benevolence. To-
“ gether with great chearfulness
“ of mind, and equality of tem-
“ per, she retained an uncommon
“ quickness of apprehension, and
“ vigour of understanding, to the
“ time of her death. Having
“ lived much in the world, and
“ being well acquainted with
“ books, her conversation was the
“ delight of all who had the plea-
“ sure

“ fure of knowing her. Of the
“ vivacity of her wit, and her ta-
“ lents for observation, the public
“ had a specimen in a volume of
“ Letters from a Lady refiding in
“ Ruffia to her friend in England,
“ 1775,’ which fhe was in a man-
“ ner obliged to publish, to pre-
“ vent a fpurious and incorrect
“ copy from being obtruded on
“ the world. At a time of life re-
“ markable for apathy and indif-
“ rence, fhe poffeffed a degree of
“ fenfibility, and a tendernes of
“ feeling, approaching almoft to
“ weaknefs; numberlefs examples

“ of

“ of which will occur to her
“ friends on perusing this faint
“ sketch of a most amiable and
“ engaging character.”

Some of the above thoughts
had been before expressed in verse
by another of her friends in the
following manner :

The young and gay may sometimes hate
The old, both peevish and sedate,

And even shun their sight :

But sense and age, combin'd with mirth,
Which smil'd on VIGOR's happy birth,

And nature here unite.

These charm alike both old and young,
Attentive to the matron's tongue,

They catch her air and voice ;

Age, with accomplishments like these,
The most inanimate must please,

And be their taste and choice.

Then

Then think not us so dull a pair,
Who wish not age and sense to share,
And hear their converse sweet :
Impatient for the hour we wait,
Which calls us to that honour'd gate,
Where wit and wisdom meet.

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PREFACE.

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date to

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I*.

Petersburgh, 1728.

Dear Madam,

A Ship being ready to depart puts me in mind of giving you some account of myself, or, what is more agreeable to me, of enquiring after you. What I have yet seen of this place worth communicating is, first,

* This Letter, it is evident, is previous in date to all that have been printed.

B

the

the citadel, the decorations of which (or, I believe, to speak properly, I should say, the works) as a citadel, I know nothing of ; but the church, in which is the burial place of the Imperial family, is handsome ; though as they have no seats of any sort in their churches, not being allowed any other posture than kneeling or standing, it gives a naked appearance to the edifice in my eyes. The body of Peter the Great has stood under a canopy in this church till the corpse of the dutchess of Holstein, his eldest daughter, was brought hither about a fortnight after we arrived. Why his body was then put into the vault, or why it was not done before, I know not. This daughter of his, who was married to the duke of Holstein [Gottorp] not long before her father died [1725] is said to have been a complete beauty, and

and all her pictures represent her as such ; but her mind was masculine. A very sensible woman, now married to a Hanoverian, who served her many years, has entertained me with many of her maxims ; one was, that “ fear is so mean a passion, that she “ could have no conception how it “ could possibly enter into a human “ breast,” another, that “ where life, “ and a crown, were in competition, “ the first was of no value, if it interrupted the last.” After the death of her mother, when Menzikoff determined to marry the Emperor [Peter II] to his daughter, as he knew her spirit, he sent her and her husband into their own country, on very short notice, and suffered none but their own domesticks to see them, after the order, till they set out. The situation of their house made it necessary for

them to walk some distance to go on board barges which carried them to the ship : they were guarded in this walk as prisoners ; the duke was composedly silent, but she called to every soldier she saw, and asked them if they would tamely suffer a daughter of Peter the Great to be so treated by one of his slaves. When the officer, who commanded her guard, represented to her, in the most respectful and submissive manner and terms, how improper such appeals to the soldiers were, she gave him a box on the ear, and asked how he dared to treat an Imperial princess in so disrespectful a manner. She died in childbed. The child (a son) survives. It is thought, that rage and resentment occasioned her death. Her corpse lay in state for many days after its arrival, before its interment. My curiosity led me

to

to see it. It stood under a canopy, with a stool at the head and feet, and on each side. On the stool on the right side, on a cushion, was her coronet as a daughter of Russia; on the left, that as dutchess of Holstein. At the head and feet, in the same manner, were the ensigns of the order; I think, that of St. Catherine. Two ladies of the first quality, representing two ladies of her bedchamber, with six of an inferior rank, stood round the corpse, dressed in long crape veils which covered them from head to foot, face and all. At the feet stood two colonels of the guard, their regimentals very like the Roman military dress. As both of their persons were fine, though not young, they were to me striking figures, and added greatly to the solemnity of the scene.

I this minute see the ship coming down the river which is to send a boat on shore for this letter; so can add nothing more of Russia, but hope you will not forget that you have a friend there who is most truly, &c.

LET.

LETTER II*.

Petersburgh, Feb. 1728.

Dear Madam,

NOtwithstanding the declaration of your naughty husband, when he tore us asunder, some months ago, of not suffering us to receive a letter from each other, for the first year of our separation, I hope this will get to you, and find you well, as also our sweet little fellow. From that aforesaid naughty man you will have heard something of us, as I have seen many letters directed to him from the count-

* This and the two following Letters are in date the III^d, IVth, and Vth.

ing-house. You charged me to tell you something of this country in every letter, but you have heard so much of this place, that I am at a loss what to tell you. You used to say, of the wax bust of my uncle, taken in this country, that it represented the person so perfectly, that one could not help speaking to it. I have been to see one of Peter the Great, and his youngest daughter, done by the same hand. He is sitting in a great chair under a canopy, dressed in blue, trimmed with silver, in the hat which he wore at the battle of Pultowa, and which was there shot through. The holes made by the balls, (or should I say, bullets?) you are made to remark by the officer in waiting, for there is one, night and day, on that post. His daughter, the princess Nathalia, in a full dress, is standing by him, with her hand in his.

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She survived him only ten days, and died at seven years old. From the moment she heard he was dead she never shed one tear, (though she had wept almost continually during his illness), but refused all sorts of food, nor could persuasions or threats prevail with her to take any kind of sustenance, but she was actually starved to death, and was buried with him at her own request. This figure represents her as a beauty, and it is said she was so, and that the figure is very like her. What such a spirit would have produced, had she lived, I leave you to conjecture. A representation of this truly great man, and this affectionate child, as much as if you really were in their presence, filled my mind with such a train of ideas, that, after standing to look at them a great while, I burst into tears, but was
roused

roused from my contemplations by the officer's flying to me, seizing my hand, and kissing it with eagerness, and in tears. He said something to Mr. Ward, who invited him to dine with us, and told me, that he said, " he " revered me for the tenderness I expressed for his dear departed father " and master." This scene, and the surprise of the man's first emotion, had so affected my spirits, that I was glad to get home, and recover myself, before he came to dinner. He was a Russ, and quite an enthusiast to his departed sovereign. During the conversation at and after dinner, not one word of which I understood, he speaking no language but his own, Mr. Ward, who speaks it well, discovered he had been an acquaintance of my late uncle, and, on hearing I was his niece, he redoubled his professions of friendship

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ship for me, and offers of serving me in any way in his power. This little adventure has occasioned a good deal of mirth between Mr. Ward and some of his old acquaintance here.

Remember you are to be very minute in every thing relating to yourself, and our dear little man, and particularly whether you have any thoughts of producing a rival to him. I cannot wish him to be an only one, as I have often reproached his mother with being spoiled from that cause; but that has not abated my friendship for her, or made me the less her, &c.

LET-

LETTER III.

Petersburgh, Feb. 1728.

Dear Sister,

Yesterday an English ship-builder* came upon business to your brother. As he was out and Mr. Rondeau with him, I asked this man to drink tea with me. Knowing he had more opportunities of seeing the great Peter in his hours of recreation, as well as in those of business, than most

* Probably Mr. Cozens, who attended the great Peter from England, father of the present ingenious painter, Mr. Alexander Cozens, to whom prince Menzikoff was sponsor, as was the Emperor to his brother Peter (deceased).

other

other people, having travelled up the country with him on the affairs of his navy, and that he is very communicative, I asked him what had first suggested the thoughts of maritime affairs to that monarch, as I had heard that in his younger days he had an aversion to water? He said, " why, " madam, have not you seen *the little Grandfire* yet". Finding I did not know what he meant, he said, it was a boat that did belong to a merchant-ship, which was cast away near Archangel, and this boat remained on the shore; that his Majesty, coming by, saw it, and asked so many questions about it, that the use of it was explained to him. He then ordered it to be repaired, and some people to row, and sail in it before him; and at last went in it himself, notwithstanding his dislike to the water, ordered

dered it to be carried to Moscow, set himself about acquiring knowledge in maritime affairs, and, as you know, came to England, and Holland, to learn the art of ship-building, and built St. Petersburg. When he had a fleet, this boat was brought to Petersburg. The whole fleet was drawn out before Cronstadt; the empress and all her court, very finely dressed, went on board the largest ship in order to receive the emperor, who went on board this boat at Petersburg, more dressed than he had ever been seen to be, and, followed by a magnificent yacht, he was rowed by six admirals, and steered by the great admiral, to Cronstadt, and quite through the fleet, where he was saluted by every ship. He then was rowed to the ship where the empress was, where a grand entertainment was provided, and he performed

formed the ceremony of naming the boat *the little Grandfire*, and it was put on board the yacht, with all sorts of naval honours, and conveyed to St. Petersburg, and put into a house built on purpose for it, where it is now kept, and a centry constantly at the door. I engaged this honest ship-builder, who was in raptures all the time he was repeating these particulars to me, to escort me this morning to see this extraordinary machine; I mean extraordinary in its consequences. I know your curiosity about every incident relating to that great prince, which has led me into this long tale.

But you must now give me leave to drop Russia, and to take a trip in imagination to * * * *. Well then, I enter about a quarter before six; * * * * sees me come in out of the coach-yard, not having patience to drive round to the
the

the front. He runs to call his master, who is with his workmen, I meet little * * *, who has just deposited the tea-things in the drawing-room. She flies not to you, ladies, above stairs, but to Mrs. * * * *; who has just begun her tea; with the ladies bodily attendants she hurries into the drawing-room, and embraces me, and I her, too full for utterance; when down run you, leaving your two elders behind you. By the time we have expressed our joy, enters brother Ward, and a fresh scene of joy succeeds. The moment I have swallowed my tea, he hurries me out to see how our plantations thrive, and shew me those in which you have assisted him, and then down the meadow to see how the building goes on. I find it almost finished, admire the neatness of it and then, then, then—don't chide, but my tears oblige me

to

to say, dear sister, when will this pleasing reverie be realised? Oh! I hear your brother's step; I must hide my emotion; for if I cannot assist him, I am at least determined not to distress him, which, I know, I should, were he to suspect that I was not perfectly pleased with my present situation. I will therefore only add loves, as due, from, &c.

C LET-

LETTER IV.

Petersburgh, Feb. 1728.

Dear Madam,

THE agreeable flattery, that you used to me, before I left England, of chusing to take the task on yourself of corresponding with me, gave me too much pleasure for me to bear a disappointment in it without great regret. But I have been a little comforted, by a letter from Miss **, who tells me, that a right honourable is a constant visitor at . . . and has been favoured with a tête-a-tête with you in your dressing-room, which accounts for your not keeping so strictly to your word as I hoped you would

would have done. His lordship's taste is so good, that I hope his qualifications and merits are unexceptionable; and then, I imagine, I may soon wish you joy of being a countess. If so, may all the happiness the marriage state is productive of be yours!

I am now a little settled, but have the mortification of knowing that it is only for a short time; for as the court is at Moscow, and is likely to stay there, we must go thither as soon as the frost and snow make the road passable for sledges. This seems to me as a still farther remove from my friends; for though this place has now, in the absence of the court, none of the people of fashion left in it, yet it has all the trading people, many of the military, and also the members of several of the colleges, as they are styled here, such as that of commerce,

naval, and several others; but where any of these have any of the nobility in them, they are with the court, or on their own estates, and only those of an inferior rank are left here. Amongst these are some very conversible people; so that with their acquaintance, work, and a book, I could be very well contented to stay here, instead of rambling farther.

I was last week at the wedding of the governor of this place, count Munich,* to the widow of a Russian nobleman, a count Soltikoff. She is either a German, or a Livonian; I do not know which. Her first husband, whose name was Malza, was a Livonian, by whom she has a daugh-

* See a note on count Munich in the former collection, p. 118.

ter, who is thought to be a flame of the young monarch,† and is a maid of honour to the princess Elizabeth ‡ to whom her mother has been governess. The count has, by his first lady, a son and four daughters. The son is on his travels; the eldest daughter, married to a Livonian nobleman, is still here with her father; the second, about sixteen, is very pretty and agreeable; the two youngest are children. The company assembled at his house about five in the afternoon. It was very numerous, consisting of the families above-mentioned, except the traders. As to the outward appearance of this large group, a few had

† Peter II. See note ‡ p. 11. of the former volume

‡ Second daughter of Peter the Great, and empress 1741. She died, unmarried, 1762.

the air of gentility, but the rest you would have laughed at. They were violently dressed, but in things that seemed to have been the shew-dress of the family for at least three generations, and the manner and address of the wearers of the same standing. When the ceremony was over, the married couple stood hand in hand, while every individual of this large company came up to them, and made a very low bow, or curtsy. The musick then struck up, and the dancing began, which consisted of minuets, and Polish dances. They are danced by several couples in a boree step; the first couple sets the figure, and all the rest follow them without ever letting go their partners hands. At different parts of the tune they strike the heels of their shoes together in a kind of cadence. When the company was seated, to my great surprise

surprise and joy, Mr. Ward handed a fine woman, at least turned of forty, dressed entirely in the English fashion, only as it was worn about five years ago. She addressed me in German, and I observed a general smile on our meeting. Mr. Ward said, "Madam, my wife speaks no German, so you will be so good as to speak English." She answered, in perfectly good English, "You know, sir, I have forgot English"; nor would she speak one word more the whole evening. It seems, Mr. Ward was her instructor in the English tongue, and it was to this lady that I used to send clothes over every year, and on which, you may remember, your father and Mr. M. used to be so merry with him as to his cruelty: and after I observed the above-mentioned smile, I recollected having sent over

those she then wore, which made me know who she was, and consequently observe her narrowly. She most certainly has been handsome. She seemed delighted at his finding her in an exalted state, and with the title of excellence, though not very fond of him who has given her a right to it. She has not yet visited me, and, it must be confessed, it is a nice point. But this lady has carried me away from my subject. We had a grand supper, at which we sat from nine o'clock till near one, when we took our leaves, as I now will of you, as in duty bound, &c.

LET.

LETTER V*.

Moscow, 1729:

WELL, my dear madam, at last you have made ample reparation for your long silence, and it was a very agreeable surprize to me, about a week ago, to see your hand on the direction of a letter which must have met one of mine to you on the road. I find Miss * * 's intelligence was true, in relation to Lord . . . And so you have actually dismissed his lordship.

* This and all the following are in date the VIIth, VIIIth, IXth, Xth, XIth, XIIth, and XIIIth.

I doubt

I doubt not but your reasons for so doing were good; though if you had no other but what you mention, I must think he is unfortunate, in missing great happiness by your having a wrong opinion of your merits, and suspecting his sincerity, when he professed himself captivated with your person, and not with your fortune. But as I am now never likely to know him, let us talk of other matters.

Your desires are to me commands; so you shall be obeyed in the question you ask, concerning the younger part of Mr. * * 's family, though I own my curiosity is much raised to know what can have occasioned your asking it. This family then consists of two sons and a daughter; the father and mother, as you, I find, know, were in a low rank in their own country, but do not want pride, now their affairs
are

are better, and so keep up their children very close, as they think them of vast consequence. The eldest son, about twenty, is a genteel young man, neither pertly forward, nor bashfully diffident. The daughter, about eighteen, is very handsome, or, I believe I should rather say, pretty, but a little awkward; which possibly proceeds from her mother's treating her as a child, always saying, "the child" does so and so. The youngest son is about twelve or thirteen, a lusty, handsome, rude boy. We had lately a little ball, only for our country folks, to return those they had made for us. The two heads of this family, with their eldest son and daughter, were of the party. I observed, that the son behaved very properly, but that the young lady declined dancing, and her brother talking eagerly to her every time she refused,
and

and she looking displeased, I took the opportunity of their talking together to express to her some wonder that she declined dancing, and asked, if she was not well. I hope, you will do me the justice to believe me more inclined to pity than mirth on her answering, " Yes, very well, but I " ashamed to dance, and wish I was " at home, where I know brother " Peter is pure merry with the maids, " for mamma charged them to play " with him." In the course of the evening, Mr. **, who loves his bottle, and had made rather too free with it, began to make a kind of love to all the young girls, by turns, which, it seems, is his constant custom, when he has drank freely, and some of the company told me, that he was very entertaining when he was in one of those humours; but as the buffoonery
of

of a drunkard never could amuse me, I did not mind him, till I saw him address himself to this poor girl, who wished so much to be at home. Compassion then got the better of my dislike to intoxication, and I went and sat down next to her. Just as I did so, he was saying, with a theatrical air, "She is fair, ye Gods! how heavenly fair!" While she, with a hunch of her elbow, said, "Let me alone." He instantly made another quotation quite proper to the occasion. The poor thing, in spite of all I could urge to persuade her to say nothing, as nature and education unfortunately made her incapable of saying any thing to the purpose, would cry, every time he uttered one of these theatrical speeches, "Do be quiet, you ugly thing," and so forth; and he uttering such a number of these whims

whams

whams, so pat to the purpose, and with so much humour, that it was impossible not to suffer a laugh to get the better (for the moment, at least) of humanity, I tried all I could to find out whether want of education alone was the occasion of this poor thing's manner, or whether want of sense were not added to it; but really cannot say; though I do not think that she has so much folly, as real bashfulness, in her pretty face. Mr. Ward says, he guesses that the * * * family have set you to make this enquiry, from fears of a scheme for the one who is here. But, I dare say, they may be easy on that head; though as it is known here, that, if the eldest brother leaves no children, he is worth catching, I think they run a risk by leaving him here, though he does not want sense so much as prudence. You may remember

remember to have heard, that formerly black teeth were esteemed a beauty in Russia, and that they dyed them black. Last week the wife of an admiral whom I had assisted with a medicine prescribed in a lying-in, and that could not be got at any shop, came to make me a visit of thanks. She is exceedingly handsome, though not very young, when her mouth is shut, but as frightful when it is open, her teeth being dyed black and shining, as if japanned. I really fear that I started, when she first opened her mouth. Mr. Ward says, he hardly thought any one had used this disguise so lately as her age indicates. And so with these black teeth I will bid you farewell, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

Moscow, 1729.

WHAT an unreasonable woman are you, my dear madam, to make so strange a use of the lenity of your spouse (as your good cousin calls him,) of suffering you to write in three or four months, instead of twelve, to set me the almost impossible task of giving you an account of the fall of Menzikoff! He is quite forgotten here; but by asking questions the following is what I have learned. On his shewing an intention of setting his daughter on the throne, the nobility grew jealous, and wished his ruin. He was so sensible of this, that he had banished

nished many, and designed doing so by many more. The young monarch never saw any one, except at the drawing-room, where he himself was always at his elbow, but his preceptors, his sister,* about a year older than himself, the princess Elizabeth, his aunt, then about fifteen, and Menzikoff's family. Things were in this situation, when Menzikoff had finished a church at a country-house, of which he was very fond, about twelve miles farther from Petersburgh than Peterhoff, to which last place he carried the emperor, and his sister, and left them there, while he went to the first to prepare all things to receive the young monarch with the utmost magnificence, who was to be present at the dedication of this church, and, as many supposed, then,

* Princess Nathalia.

D

and

and there to marry his daughter. Against the day appointed for this ceremony, a plot had been prepared, contrived, it is supposed, by count Osterman, who was preceptor to the emperor. He had asked Menzikoff's leave to remain some days at Peterburgh, after his pupil went to Peterhoff; which was granted. Amongst those under sentence of banishment was a nobleman very much in years, and one that the poor little monarch loved. Osterman had prepared and instructed all his actors, and early in the morning of the day that the sovereign was to go to Menzikoff's, this old lord came abruptly into the room where he and his sister were at breakfast, and said, he had, by the absence of Menzikoff, the comfort of seeing his majesty once more, and he should now die easy. The poor child answered,

“ Why

“ Why do you talk of dying? are
 “ you ill?” He then burst into tears,
 and said, as he was banished, at his
 age it was next to a certainty that he
 should never return. The child ex-
 claimed, “ Banished: who has ba-
 “ nished you?” He said, Menzikoff
 had been so daring as to send an order
 from his Majesty to banish him. “ I
 “ never gave any such order,” re-
 plied the child, “ nor shall you go.
 “ Oh sister!” said he, crying, “ what
 “ shall I do? he shall not go.” She,
 as instructed, said, “ Do, dear father,
 “ retire for a little while, or my bro-
 “ ther will cry himself sick,” He did
 so; and when he was gone, she said,
 “ Do, brother, send for my aunt, and
 “ advise with her what to do, to get
 “ you out of this tyrant’s power, who
 “ treats you ill.” He ordered a per-
 son to go for her; but was answered,

that a messenger was just arrived from her to his majesty.

He was admitted, and said, that the princess was setting out that morning to wait on his majesty, but that prince Menzikoff had taken all her horses, saying, he wanted them. This threw the poor child into a fresh passion of tears and bewailing. The princess then advised him to send for his preceptor, and consult with him. This was done, but it took up so much time, that Menzikoff arrived to fetch the emperor just after Osterman came into the room to him. The child flew to him, clung to him, and said, " I will not see Menzikoff." The count said, " Pray, sir, be composed. " Your guards most certainly will not let him come in, if you order them not." He cried out, " I do order them." Just as Menzikoff appeared

at

at the door of the antechamber, the centries crossed their muskets, which denied him entrance. He expostulated, but to no purpose; so he retired, and returned to his own house from whence he came, where in about an hour he was arrested by the emperor's orders, and sent away towards Siberia with all his family, that very night, and the guards that were on the spot took the oaths to the young emperor, as did all those at Petersburg the next day, whither he and his sister went in the morning. Does not this appear like a puppet-show? A superannuated old man, and two children, overturn an empire. For such in effect it was, by overturning the regent. Now how much better might we have employed our time by prattling of our own affairs and our ourselves, than

of cocks and bulls, and pye men, nay
or even of emperors, that we have
nothing to do with. But you com-
mand, and I obey, as becomes, &c.

LET:

LETTER VII.

Moscow, Oct. 1729.

Dear Sister,

THIS is the last letter you will be plagued with from the Russian bear, till the summer, as this is the last ship for this season, and we are now preparing for the winter, and I own that the apparatus frights me. Mr. Ward yesterday brought me home some very handsome scarlet damask, I thought, for a night gown; but before I could thank him, out came from the same parcel a great fur, like a petticoat in shape, but, to all appearance, of a weight that no animal

D 4

with

with only two legs could carry it. This, he told me, was for a soubre, or gown to travel in, or to wear to any place where ceremony is not required. For more ceremonious occasions there was crimson velvet, and ermine to line it, for a cloak, and a broad forehead-cloth of black velvet, lined with satin, and a muffler under the chin, that is fastened to it on the temples; so that only eyes, mouth, and nose are seen. It is so contrived that it may be worn with the head full-dressed, without disordering the hair or cap, but when I travel, I am to have a fur cap over it, and no other head-dress. As it is, I am so disguised you would hardly {know me, for, at your brother's desire, I went into the dress of the country very soon after I got here, and found that he judged right, as it prevented much staring at me. At
the

the wedding of our governor*, I observed a lady, with a picture of the empress Catherine hung to a blue ribbon on her left side, ornamented with diamonds. After dancing a minuet with a plain-dressed, but gentleman-like man, he said, in rather broken English, "Madam, pray give me
 " leave to introduce my wife to you,
 " who would have been to wait on you
 " before now, but she has been ill,
 " and this is the first day of her going
 " out." He then brought this picture-lady to me, who entertained me very politely, and told me who all the company were, and made me a visit the next day, and we are become as intimate as the distance between us will admit of, she living chiefly at Cronstadt, her husband being a sea-

* Count Munich. See a former letter.

officer.

officer. She is daughter to the clergyman to whom the empress Catherine was a servant when she married her first husband, the Swedish corporal. When she came to be empress, she sent for this clergyman and his family, and gave them a pension, and often went to see them, and took this daughter about herself, and always shewed great love for her. The emperor married her to this gentleman, and gave her a fortune, and, on her marriage, she had this picture pinned on her breast by the empress. They are both good sort of people, and, I believe, a very happy couple. This surprising woman, who, from being the wife of a corporal, became that of a monarch, has so far raised my curiosity as to make me very inquisitive as to any anecdotes about her ; and by all the information I can get, I think that,

if

if she had died four or five years before the great Peter, she would have made a great figure in history ; for gallantry with a monarch, or, more properly speaking, the gallantries she had had, before her marriage with him, would have been overlooked. But you say, why do not I tell you her history, as I have heard it here ? now though this will spin out this letter to an unreasonable length, I tell you that she was servant in the family of a clergyman in Finland, as nursery-maid to this above-mentioned lady. She married a Swedish corporal, and was taken by a party of Russians, some say, on the wedding-day, others say, the next day. No one knows what was the fate of her husband. She was by General Baure, who commanded the party, given to prince Menzikoff, as were many more Swedish female prisoners.

prisoners. He was so fond of her, as to be jealous, and kept her very close. Somebody told the emperor what a beautiful Swedish girl Menzikoff had, but that he suffered no one to see her. The emperor said, he would go directly to Menzikoff's, and tell him he wanted one of his Swedish girls to get up his linen, and that his informer should make him such a sign when the person he mentioned appeared. They went that moment. The monarch made his proposed request; several were produced, without the sign being made. On which the emperor said, "I am sure, you have more, and I" "insist on seeing them all." She then was produced, and he took her home with him, and, after some years cohabitation with her, at last made her his wife, and continued very fond of her till he discovered an intrigue between

tween her and one of her attendants, who was taken up on some other pretence, and condemned to lose his head. This sentence was executed, and the emperor carried her in a close coach to see him suffer. I leave you to form to yourself the situation into which that sight, and his upbraidings, must put her. However, he shewed no outward resentment, on his children's account; but it was generally supposed, that as soon as they were married, she would have severely felt his resentment; and her very dissolute life, after his death, made every one say, that she merited any severity he could have shewn her. Some years before this a man was admitted to the presence of the emperor, whom, after he had talked with him some time, he locked into his apartment, and went himself to that of the empress; after
some

some stay there, she came out with him, and went to his in great commotion, where she was heard to exclaim, " It is he ! " and in the course of three hours, that they two and this unknown man were together, she was heard to weep much and often repeat, " You promise me, he shall not be " hurt." He, without any passion, answered, " I do promise, on my honor, and pity him enough to do " every thing for his ease and advantage." This man was sent away in the night, and was supposed to be the corporal [her husband]. She was in strong hystericks all that night, and he very tender over her. But you must be glad that my paper stands your friend.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

Moscow, Oct. 1729.

I AM now, my dear sister, to give you some account of myself and this new scene and new faces; for I thought otherwise it would be too long a silence, a thing that we are both (you know) accused of not loving by any means. This is a charge to which I plead guilty and hope so do you, as I should not love you so well, if it were not so; for reserve to me renders society more disagreeable than any one thing I know. I can sit alone with great chearfulness, as my mind is active enough to make many agreeable conversations present in imagination;

gination ; but to sit in company, or, more properly speaking, in presence, of people who only now and then break in on my thoughts by a formal sentence or two, to which I must answer with great circumspection, is intolerable. So, pray, let us prate with our usual freedom ; in spite of the laughers and prudent ones. I shall pass over our journey, which was not, you may suppose, the most entertaining, as I was condemned to that same odious silence, unless when we met to eat, when, I fear, my tongue took care to use its liberty at the expence of your poor brother's ears. But he has used that flippant little machine to such indulgence, that it has no constraint from his presence. I had a thousand questions to ask, " What " was such a thing, that we passed at " such and such a time ? oh dear, how " could

“ could you sleep? I longed to ask
 “ you then.” I hate these machines
 that hold only one person. I can only
 sleep in the night, and look at the
 scenes we pass, when it is light, and
 so forth, till I was again shut up
 alone in my cradle*, for such my ma-

* This vehicle and mode of travelling have
 been lately more fully described by Mr. Cox.
 “ On account of the narrowness of the roads,
 “ each person had a separate carriage. There
 “ are various kinds of sledges used for travel-
 “ ling in this country ; some are entirely close ;
 “ others quite open ; those which we employed
 “ were partly open and partly covered. A
 “ sledge of this sort is shaped like ‘ a cradle ;’
 “ its tilt, which rises from the hinder extre-
 “ mity, and projects to about two feet, was
 “ open in front, but provided with curtains,
 “ which might be drawn and tied together
 “ whenever the weather was severe. The out-
 “ side was secured with matting and oil-skin ;

E

“ and

chine appeared. Well, we arrived at last, found a house taken for us, and are now tolerably settled in it. The foreign ministers, and their ladies, have visited, and we have returned the visits; though this is, I find, looked on as a condescension in those ladies, as your poor brother's title of "Con-
 "ful" only does not tack the "Ex-
 "cellence" to it, and has cost me some trouble to hinder my own servants from giving, and I am no way

" and the inside with coarse cloth. Within
 " was a mattress, feather-bed, and coverlid, or
 " quilt, of coarse cloth. In this travelling
 " couch I sometimes lay extended at full
 " length; sometimes sat cross-legged like a
 " Turk; and at other times raised myself on a
 " seat formed by two cushions. Each sledge
 " was drawn by two horses, harnessed one be-
 " fore the other, &c. *Travels into Russia,*
 " &c."

ambitious

ambitious of. Amongst these high folks there are two very agreeable, the duke of Liria, minister from Spain, and the French consul. The first is son to the duke of Berwick*, talks perfect English, and has the manners and freedom of our country. He is fond of speaking English, and of mortifying the German pride, that reigns amongst the other excellences, which he does with great humour and good nature. He has a great suite, and gentlemen of different nations amongst them, but has quartered himself upon

* Natural son to K. James II, by Mrs. Arabella Churchill, the duke of Marlborough's sister. He was killed at the siege of Philipburgh, 1734. His son, the above-mentioned duke, is now living, and has a son, styled Marquess of Jamaica, married to the youngest daughter of Prince Gustavus of Stolberg. Cha. Steuart, called count of Albany, married the eldest.

us every Thursday to eat a joint of meat roasted in the English manner. He then comes alone, and no other is ever invited, but General Tiffin, the Holstein minister, and Mons. Villerdeau, the French consul, who are both most polite, chearful, and sensible companions, and have in some measure reversed the characters of their country; the first being full of vivacity, and the other of grave humour, to which his having resided many years in Spain may have contributed. The two last are batchelors, and the dutchess of Liria is in Spain; so I am the only female of this group. Hitherto I have only talked of myself. The place, as I have only seen it in winter, affords little matter, and I can hardly bear the thoughts of seeing it in summer, as then I find I must submit to be in a very painful situation, Mr. Ward
being

being obliged, during the shipping season, to be at Peterburgh and chusing I should stay here. And that the government business may not suffer, while he is taking care of the trade, Mr. Rondeau also remains here. This is, I own, the hardest trial of my obedience he has inflicted since I promised it; but obeyed he shall be in this, as well as in all things else, however grievous to me. His health makes me tremble at the very thoughts of being absent from him, as it requires tender nursing. Come, fortitude, to my aid! as it did, when I parted with a fond father, from whose presence I had never been a fortnight in my whole life, till I left him to come into a strange country. But, alas! I then had a comfort I shall now be deprived of. I fancy I now see you run into the next room with "Oh! poor thing:

" his health is not better, I find, as
 " she and we hoped it would!" and
 then read this part of my letter, and
 our grave eldest sister say, " If she
 " would not make such a fuss about
 " his health, it would be better."
 The next senior says, " It is pity she
 " is so childish, but she cannot help
 " it, so I pity her." Tell our brother
 in the King's Bench walks, I design to
 answer his letter by shipping, but that,
 for all his bar wit, he would give his
 ears to be as truly beloved by a cheer-
 ful female as his brother is by one who
 loves him for that brother's sake, as
 well as his own merit; nay, and that
 all the law quirks cannot, shall not,
 alter that love. I had almost forgot
 to tell you, that I have seen the great
 bell; it is indeed surprising; but I dare
 not venture to tell you the weight, for
 fear of telling an untruth; this, how-
 ever,

ever, I can tell you without that hazard, it is not so heavy as my heart is at the thoughts of this untoward separation. Loves, &c. you know, are things of course. I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

Moscow, 1729.

YOU say, my dear madam, that Mr. *** has commanded you to ask me, if I have seen any Slabodians yet, and what I think of them; and add, that his smile, at giving the order, was gayer than usual; which has raised your curiosity, to know whether these Slabodians are two or four-legged animals, and beg me to be speedy in satisfying your impatience, as well as that of your two sisters. But first, I must tell you, that you have raised mine to as high a pitch to
guess

guess which of my old acquaintance could have the power so far to steal away the profound and natural gravity of my name-sake, as to make her do a rude thing. Had it been the lively Maria, I should not have wondered that a small matter should strike her imagination in so ludicrous a light as to get the better of her good breeding for a moment; and I am almost tempted to defer answering your question till you have let me into the secret of who, and to which of you, this laughable lover comes; for that, I think I am sure, is the case. But, for once, I will trust your generosity, that your next shall gratify my curiosity, and come to the Slabodians. “Slabode,” in the Russian language, is a “suburb” in ours. Now these “animals”, as you very emphatically call them, have only two legs that are visible;

visible; but, from many circumstances, one would imagine that they had two more that are hid. However that be, from their having inhabited this very Slabode, time out of mind, they are now called Slabodians. The ancestors of them were most certainly men, of almost all nations, who came to settle in this country in different occupations; but all inhabited this place, as being the most convenient for them. In course of years, they, and their descendants, as they grew up, married amongst each other, and each family, retaining their original language, is now become a mixture of them all, without any one's being perfect. None of them now are of any visible profession, nor are they known to have any possessions, but live in houses, with equipages, servants, &c. like people of the first rank. Several
of

of them, whom Mr. Ward formerly knew, have visited us. One family, whose predominant mixture is Russian, German, and English, invited us to dinner, they called it ; I can find no name for it. The company was very large, of each sex ; but the dinner, for number of dishes, and the quantity each contained, I guess sufficient to have fed the whole nation, from which each of their progenitors came. At this enormously loaded table we sat four hours. My poor arms were quite fatigued with giving away plates, each loaded with enough to have dined me for a week ; but if I was at first surprised at the quantity on the table, I was astonished at that which every Slabodian swallowed, and could not have supposed any human stomach could have contained it. They drank in proportion, except

two or three pretty young girls, next to one of whom Mr. Ward placed Mr. Rondeau, with a smile, which, I thought, had meaning. These ladies, though helped, or at least offered, of every thing as the others were, did not eat the quantity of the leg of a lark. Mr. Rondeau took great pains, and professed great concern at the loss of appetite of her that sat next him, by offering and proposing every dish to her; till an old gentleman, on the opposite side of the table, roared out, " Sir, do not give yourself so much trouble about my daughter; she will not eat here; it is not the fashion amongst us for unmarried lasses to eat before folks; but I warrant she had taken care to line her inside well, before she came out, and will stuff like a devil, when she gets home." Guess at the face
this

this speech produced in a man naturally delicate, and bred among the politeſt circles. He gave Mr. Ward and me, who ſat next each other, ſuch a look as had nearly put me into my poor nameſake's caſe.* Well, at laſt, to my great joy, we roſe, and the ladies were conducted into a drawing-room, where were ſet out on a long table coffee, tea, chocolate, and a profuſion of cakes of all ſorts, of which the married ladies ate, as if they had kept the unmarried ones faſt for the four preceding hours. When this was over, and a freſh cargo of cakes and ſweet-meats of all ſorts ſet on a ſide-board, the card parties were ſeated, and the gentlemen favoured us with their company, as lookers on, moſt of them with long pipes in their

* See page 57.

mouths,

mouths, which really rendered the room almost insufferable. These obliging attendants, with great gallantry, frequently pulled the pipe out of their mouths, and with that in one hand, and cake and sweetmeats in the other, offered them to the ladies. As their number was large, this gallantry, from some one or other of them, was almost incessant. No refusal was taken. I observed, the Slabodian stomachs still found room for this regale. That of your humble servant was almost overset, and I trembled lest my pockets would hold no more, when we were summoned to a supper as plentiful as the dinner; where, to my astonishment, room was still found in all the stomachs, but ours and the poor single girls, who durst not touch a bit. We sat at this meal till one in the morning, and then were dismissed with

with many apologies for the smallness of our entertainment. I forgot to tell you, that drams of all sorts were served several times during each of these gorging matches, and we were told by the seniors of each sex, how necessary they were in this cold country. I never, I think, rejoiced so much as when I got home, to unload my pockets, and laugh: but am resolved never to go to another Slabodian dinner. Now do you determine whether a Slabodian is worth catching. If you chuse it, I will send you one, pipe and all, being, &c.

LET-

LETTER X.

Moscow, 1728.

YOUR "spouse" will have heard that Mr. Ward is returned to Petersburg, so that you will fancy I make a mistake in dating this from Moscow. I wish I did, but I am left here, as you may suppose, in a very disagreeable situation, as his health gives me a thousand fears, beside the loss of his company. I have a female friend, or, more properly speaking, an acquaintance, who stays with me till his return; as being in the house with Mr. Rondeau alone would have been attended with very disagreeable restraint,

restraint, if I had only servants; though his conversation, as it is now, is a great consolation to me. The duke of Liria has taken me under his protection; and the mentioning this protector puts it in my head to bring you acquainted with the set of company I now converse with, which are the ministers from different courts. His grace is minister from Spain, and is son to the duke of Berwick. He is also very agreeable, very lively, very polite, and good-natured. Count Wrattelaus, minister from the emperor of Germany, is a great talker, and drinks hard, but consequently is not always the most agreeable company. France has at present only a *chargé des affaires* and a consul. The first, Mons. Mangion, *la la*, no harm, nor much amusement. The other, Mons. Vil-
F lerdeau,

lardeau, a very sensible, polite, friendly man, and a most agreeable companion. Denmark has Monsr. Westphal, a formal, sensible man, who is a walking chronicle of this country, where he has resided, in his present capacity, near thirty years. Sweden Monsr. Ditmar, an old soldier, in all the wars of Charles XII, who has been nearly as long in this country as the other; many years of the time a prisoner of war in Siberia, and speaks the language of this country as well as a native; a chearful, good-natured, friendly man. Poland Monsr. La Fort. He has a wife, of whom more by and by. Holstein Count Bondy, who has also a wife, of whom also by and by; also General Tessin, a well-bred, agreeable soldier, Holland Monsr. Swarzt, a very young man. The resident
 from

from the emperor, besides count Wrattelaus, is Mons. Hockholst, who has a wife. Now for the ladies. Madame Bondy is handsome, but did not invent gun-powder, has had rather a low education. Count Wrattelaus is her great admirer, but it is only flirtation. Madame La Fort has been handsome, is lively, witty, and has always been bred in a court. His grace of Liria is her dangler. She has an assembly every evening, and does the honours very well. She loves play, and does not lose by it. Madame Hockholst is neither young nor handsome, but very good-natured. She is domestick, and, having no children, has a nursery of dogs, and is troublesome with her fondness of them, but is so complaisant, as to confine them to their nursery, when any one is with

her that does not love them. Here is also, in this service, General La Fort, nephew to the famous favourite of the great Peter. This is an amiable man, and has as amiable a wife and daughter, who are my very good neighbours, General Bondy and his lady are also agreeable. This is the set I chiefly converse with, though there are some others that I visit.

I was much surprised to receive a letter lately from Miss * * * * I concluded she had long since changed her name, but find that affair is all at an end, and I will trust to your prognosticks another time; though I own, I then accused you, in my own mind, of a little pique in your judgment. I am glad you are likely to produce a play-fellow to my sweet little man. I am obliged to you for your wishes for my company, but,
 alas !

in our suburb, to a church in the city, on horseback, attended by a numerous train of nobility, preceded by a party of the chevalier guards. These are a body of men instituted (I think) by the empress Catherine. Every private man of them ranks as a lieutenant. Their dress is in the old Roman military garb, very rich, and their duty only about the person of the sovereign. Then came a large number of the great officers of the court; then his imperial majesty, between a field-marshal on his right, and his governor, count Osterman,* on his left; then another train of officers of the court, and nobility; the whole closed by another party of the same guards. A lucky stop, and a good place, gave

* High Chancellor of Russia, and prime minister, in 1740.

me a full view of him. He appeared tall of his age, has light-brown hair, blue eyes, rather a handsome face, and, I fancy, a fine complexion ; but tanned like a mulatto. He has a very grave look ; if I were not speaking of a monarch, I should say, a surly one ; so much so, that even the bloom of youth loses its pleasingness by it. He is, they say, very reserved, and does not chuse to make himself master of any language but his own. He was doatingly fond of his sister,* and she could persuade him to almost any thing. One anecdote, I think I can be sure, is true. One of his valet de chambres, a Frenchman, was cutting the princess's hair, and she talking to him in French, when the emperor came into her apartment, and said,

* See p. 33, &c.

“ Sister,

“ Sister, why do you talk French to
 “ him? he speaks better Russian than
 “ you do French.” She answered,
 “ That is the very reason, brother,
 “ why I do it; for would it not be
 “ shameful, that he, who has so few
 “ helps, should learn our language
 “ better than we learn his who have
 “ helps to it?” He patted her cheek,
 and kissed her, and said, “ I will ap-
 “ ply for the future”, and to the man,
 “ Do you always speak French to
 “ me, when you are about me”. This
 princess promised fair to have in-
 herited her grandfather’s genius.
 Count Osterman made use of her in-
 fluence over his pupil to do, or pre-
 vent his doing, any thing he liked or
 disliked. The day she died, the worth-
 less young favourite* that this young

* Prince Dolgorucki.

monarch

monarch has unhappily taken a fancy to, finding count Osterman in the next room to that where her corpse lay, with the greatest grief painted in his face, with a sneer said to him, " There lies your princess. Now go, " and complain of me to her." Every worthy person agrees that the empire had the greatest loss by her death, that it has had since that of her grandfather, and no lovers of the country speak of her without tears. She died of a consumption, and behaved through a tedious illness like a heroine. Now I have talked of what I think little better than a story of a cock and a bull, I expect you will tell me all about my old neighbourhood. How go on the handy dandys? Are they so fond still, or is the honey-moon almost over? In short, I insist on being told what you are all doing, or no more Russian tittle tattle shall you have from, &c.

F I N I S.

CORRECTIONS and ADDITIONS.

Note on " Gen. Baur," p. 43.

Lieut. Gen. Baur was a man of a very low extraction in Holstein. He was only a corporal, when he entered the Czar's service. He distinguished himself by sundry eminent actions, and was at last promoted to the rank of General through prince Menzikoff's recommendation.

De la Motraye.

Letter X, should have been dated " 1729."

ADDITIONAL NOTES, &c. on the former
Volume,

Letter I. should have been dated Feb. 1728.

Letter II. ——— April 1729.

P. 11. note † l. 2. for ' but ' r. ' scarce.'

P. 12. *Add to this note.* Prince Menzikoff died at Berosowa, on the most distant frontiers of Siberia, in November 1731. His daughter, who had been betrothed to the Emperor, (as mentioned in Letter V,) died before her father, in exile. For an account of the burial of his other daughter, see Letter XXI.

P. 13.

P. 13. *Add to Note* *. She gave great hopes, and had an understanding much superior to her years. See Letter XI. of Vol. II.

Manstein's Memoirs.

Letter III. should have been dated Nov. 4, 1729.

P. 18. Add as a note on Prince Dolghorucki's sister*. " * This princess," says General Manstein, " without being absolutely a beauty, " was a very pretty figure : she was above the " middle stature, and very well shaped. She " had something languishing in her large blue " eyes, and besides wanted neither wit nor " education."

Letter IV should have been dated December 2, 1729.

P. 22. Add as a note * The emperor had made several excursions and hunting parties on the grounds of Dolghorucki, his favourite, who giving him one day a breakfast at a country house which he had near Moscow, presented his

his sister to him, and he from that moment resolved to marry her.

Manstein's Memoirs.

P. 23. Add as a note on "palace," l. 2.* of Le Fort, where the emperor then resided.

P. 26. Note on "nor agreeable," l. 19.

* It is generally agreed, that he had a good heart, a great deal of vivacity and penetration, and an excellent memory. It was enough for him to hear any thing once to retain it.

Manstein.

P. 28. l. 16. for 'sixth' r. 'fifteenth'.

P. 29. Add note on "head-ach," l. penult.

* The ignorance of the physicians, and the too ungovernable vivacity of that prince, were the cause of his death. He would not bear to remain quiet: he opened a window, and the small pox, which had begun to come out, struck in again.

Manstein.

P. 32. Add note on l. 11. "turbulent
"one".* "The true reason," says General
ral

ral Man. . . , " for preferring the dutchefs of
 " Courland, was, that she being at Mittau, the
 " remoteness of that place would afford time
 " for the firmer establishment of the republi-
 " can system."

Ib. Note on l. 13. † She arrived at Mos-
 cow, February 25.

Letter VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X, should
 all have been dated 1730.

Letter XIII, ——— Jan. 1732.

Letter XXI—XXIX, both inclusive, 1737.

Letter XXX, Petersburg, 1737.





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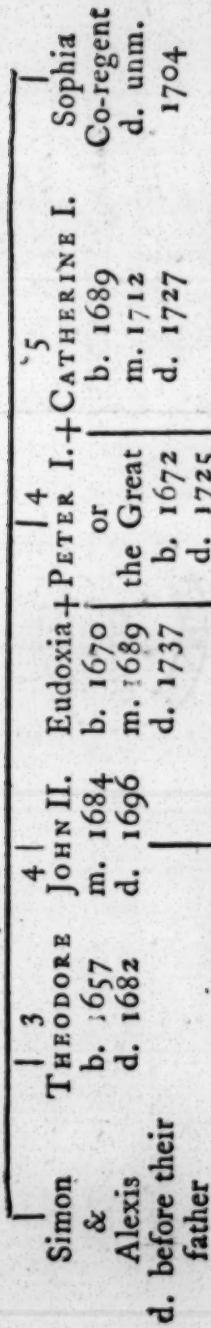
The SUCCESSION of the FAMILY of ROMANOW, now reigning in RUSSIA.

¹
MICHAEL THEODOROWITZ ROMANOW,
Son of Philaretos Archbishop of Rotow,

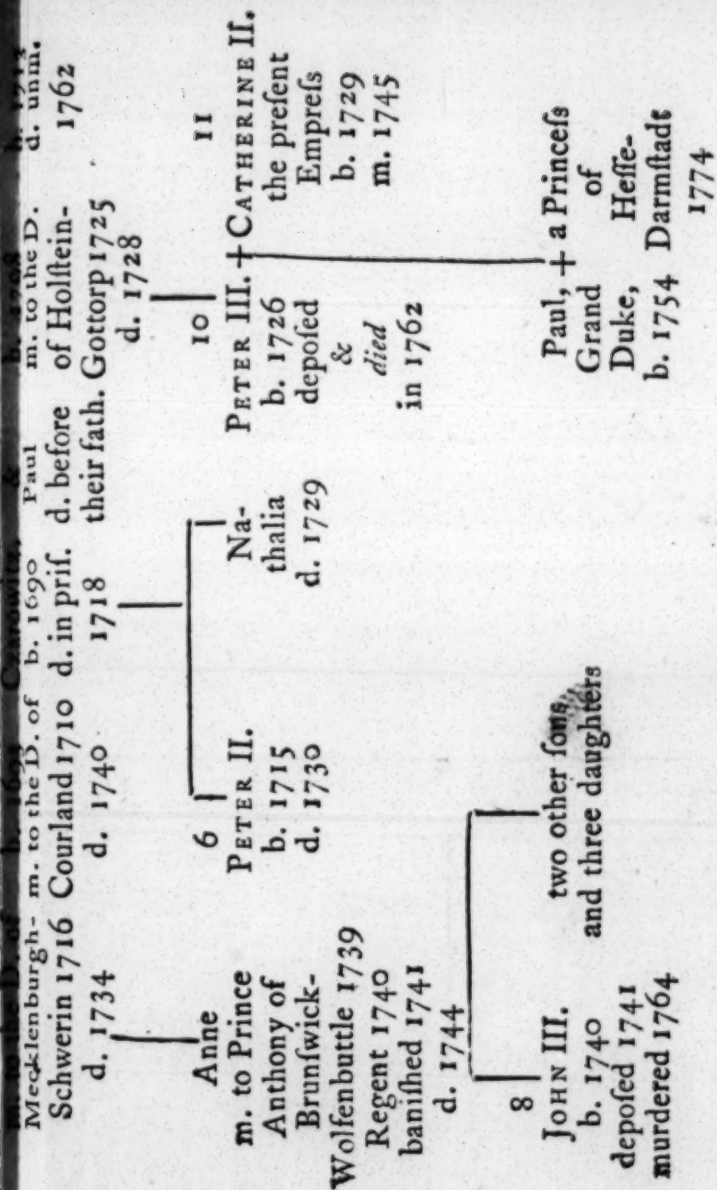
b. 1596
chosen Czar 1613
d. 1645

²
ALEXIS MICHAELOWITZ,

b. 1630
d. 1676



Mecklenburgh-Schwerin 1716 Courland 1710 d. in prif. 1710 d. before of Holstein- 1743 d. unm. 1762



N. B. The figures over the names shew the order of succession.
 John II. and Peter the Great were joint sovereigns, and
 Sophia Co-regent, till 1689.

